

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	INL-00	DOEE-00
	DOT-00	PDI-00	DS-00	EAP-00	DHSE-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	MOFM-00
	MOF-00	VCIE-00	NEA-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NIMA-00	OPR-00
	PM-00	GIWI-00	SCT-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00	FMPC-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	NCTC-00	ASDS-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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 AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2019
 TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PK](#)
 SUBJECT: MILITARY GROUND OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH WAZIRISTAN SLOWS
 REF: ISLAMABAD 2591

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b) (d)

11. (S) Summary: A week after Pakistani ground forces began the ground combat phase of Operation RAH-e-NIJAT ("Path of Salvation") against Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) strongholds in South Waziristan, the offensive has slowed down considerably, as the Army has elected to conduct a deliberate and methodical advance employing considerable ground and aerial fires in the face of increased militant resistance. Unlike during earlier ground offensives in South Waziristan, it appears that this time the Army is committed at the very least to establishing its presence in South Waziristan and hopefully restoring stability in the larger population areas in the region. End Summary.

OPERATION RAH-E-NIJAT

12. (S/NF) On October 17, the Pakistan military launched a ground combat campaign, named Operation Rah-e-Nejat ("Path of Salvation"), against militants in the FATA's South Waziristan Agency (see refTel). Elements of three infantry divisions (ID) -- the 14th, 9th and 7th -- commenced offensive operations aimed at Taliban strongholds in Ladha, Makin, and the area south of Razmak.

IN THE EAST: 14th INFANTRY DIVISION (ID)

13. (S/NF) After intense fighting, on October 24, the 14th Division captured Kotkai, symbolically important as the hometown of Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) Chief Hakimullah and Dari Hussein Mehsud. Post contacts report that an infantry task force, including at least five tanks, has continued northward toward the village of Kazhakas. While Post believes that the Army will continue its forward movement (toward Sora Rogha via Kazhakas -- approximately six miles north), no additional advance of the 14th Division has been reported since October 24.

IN THE WEST: 9TH ID

¶4. (S/NF) Meanwhile, the 9th Division has secured Sharawangi and is currently expanding its perimeter to reinforce, resupply, and guard against counterattack. It has advanced one and a half miles further north to Chalweshti Village (which is nine miles south of Ladha). On October 25, the 9th Division reportedly seized the heights southeast of the village of Chalweshti and east of Sharawangai, an area known as Tarkona Narai. However, at this time, it is not clear if the 9th Division has established a presence in Chalweshti. The area north of the village has been subjected to significant artillery fire and air strikes in an apparent effort to prepare the battlefield for a more substantial advance toward the key objective of Kaniguram.

IN THE NORTH: 7TH ID

¶5. (S/NF) Finally, the 7th Division currently occupies blocking positions to prevent militants from fleeing into North Waziristan. It is poised to attack through Razmak from the north in a future offensive.

¶6. (S/NF) Army units have reportedly secured the heights around Razmak, Ladha, and Makin. The Pakistan Army's Special Forces, known as the Special Services Group (SSG), is staged at Wana, though its mission at this point in the campaign remains unknown. Contacts in the Pakistan Army have told Post that two infantry brigades posted on the Indian border have been alerted to deploy in support of operations in the FATA.

FUTURE OPERATIONS

¶7. (S/NF) According to Post's contacts, the Army plans to continue its attack in the west with the 9th Division moving to Kaniguram -- which must be taken to facilitate offensive operations toward Ladha and Makin. We are now looking for indications as to whether the 14th Division will continue their attack north, or possibly swing west to support the 9th Division's attack. The volume of air and artillery strikes north of the town of Kotkai leads us to assess it is more likely that the 14th Division will press the northern attack to Sora Rogha, but we await confirmation. Meanwhile, the 9th Division will move northward at a relatively slow pace, while the 7th Division continues to hold north of the town of Makin.

¶8. (S/NF) Comment: The slow-down in the ground offensive is not unexpected given the defeats the Pakistan military suffered in South Waziristan in 2004, 2005, and 2007 at the hands of the TTP. In the past, the Army concluded "treaties" with the militants as a fig leaf to cover its retreat. This time, however, the TTP has raised the stakes with a series of attacks against targets throughout the country, including police stations in Peshawar, Lahore and Islamabad, as well Army GHQ and the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex. Two Army generals have been killed. The battle for Waziristan will be difficult, long, and costly for the Army, but there appear to be no other options with the current TTP leadership.

PATTERSON